# 1NC Shell (Collapse)

A. UQ: Demand for Saudi oil is up and expected to rise- provides reserve for supply crises and is the backbone of political stability in the Kingdom. Sfakianakis[[1]](#footnote-1) ‘14

Last year, it was nearly impossible to miss headlines proclaiming the United States’ coming energy windfall. According to the U.S. International Energy Agency’s latest forecast, thanks to booming output from shale gas formations, the United States will be nearly energy self-sufficient by 2015, surpassing both Russia and Saudi Arabia in energy production. All this might seem like bad news for Saudi Arabia, which could see its regional and economic influence wane and its decades-long economic boom come to an end. But the **shale** oil bonanza **in the U**nited **S**tates **is** actually a **good** thing **for Riyadh**. Over the last few decades, oil **markets** **have** **experienced** sharp price **fluctuations**, particularly with growing demand for oil in the emerging Asian economies. **Oil** **is Saudi Arabia’s** **main** source of **revenue**, so any **price** **swings create big risks** for the kingdom. Unpredictable oil prices and a collapse in revenues in the 1980s and 1990s made Saudi Arabia particularly wary of uncertainty. Over the next few years, the increase in energy production in far-flung locations and diverse sources, including from shale, will help mitigate those swings. Eventually, increased supply will also help create stable new price floor for oil, which is now estimated to cost around $80 per barrel. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has little reason to worry about its position as the world’s supplier of last resort. Historically, **Saudi Arabia has maintained** more than **half** of **the world’s spare capacity**, even if markets did not put it to use all the time. In the future, too, **its** more than two million barrels of oil **reserves** will **prove crucial when**ever **a supply crisis erupts.** Markets that have traditionally relied on Saudi Arabia will continue to do so; and **no other country is likely to** be able to ramp up production capacity enough to **amass such a large reserve**, especially since more than a few of them have outsized domestic demand that they will struggle to meet. Since demand for oil is set to grow, Riyadh does not see U.S. shale oil production as competition. **Asia’s demand for oil will soar** over the next two decades**. According to the E**nergy **I**nformation **A**gency, from 2010 to 2040, **demand** from countries that are not members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development **will increase** by **19.3 million barrels**. And between 2011 and 2030, **China** alone will increase its oil consumption **by** as much as **66 percent** and **India** **by** more than **100 percent**. Further, **according to the** U.S. **Department of Energy**, **it will take decades for the U**nited **S**tates **to achieve** total **energy independence** -- if it ever does. Because of all that, the **demand for** **Saudi** energy **exports is set to grow**.*Luckily for Saudi Arabia, all the extra energy production is a long way off and, before it comes online, demand will continue to climb.* In the longer term, of course, the United States is not the only country that is looking to ramp up unconventional gas production. For now, though, the conditions that supported the United States’ shale boom are missing in Europe and Asia. Outside of North America, national governments retain most mineral rights, which discourages private-sector involvement and entrepreneurship. In general, these countries also levy heavier taxes on oil and gas profits than does the United States, which holds back new research and production. And access to the water needed to mine unconventional gas is a concern for all. But with enough time, the proper policies, and new technologies, scores of other countries could experience gas booms of their own. China has the largest known shale gas reserves, estimated at 1,115 trillion cubic feet. Argentina, at 802 trillion cubic feet, comes next. In terms of shale oil, Russia tops the list with about 75 billion barrels. Australia, Poland, and Algeria also have huge reserves. Luckily for Saudi Arabia, all this extra production is a long way off and, before it comes online, demand will continue to climb. FEAR ITSELF Of course, that does not mean that **Riyadh** has nothing to fear. Namely, it **worries** that **Iraqi, Libyan, and Iranian oil production will swing upward**, and that those countries will increase the amount of oil they supply to global markets. **That will drive prices down** as the kingdom’s domestic appetite for oil continues to grow, limiting the amount the country has for export. Iraqi output in particular is soaring. The country is on track to produce some three million barrels a day on average this year -- its highest sustained level in two decades. Baghdad intends to raise crude output to nine million barrels a day and export capacity to 7.5 million barrels a day by 2020. Libya could potentially ramp up production as well. Although its oil output is still being held hostage to political unrest, the government has planned to produce around 1.2 million barrels over the medium term. Finally, sanctions-crippled Iran could resume exports at some point. Because a final deal on Iran’s nuclear program is still a ways off, Iranian crude output is unlikely to reach its pre-2012 level of 3.6 million barrels per day in the near future. The country will have a hard time overcoming existing sanctions and technical hurdles to restarting production. But if the West does eventually lift all of the sanctions, Iranian oil will flood the market. It is for this reason that Western oil companies have already started courting Iran, and vice versa. Additional oil supply from Iraq, Iran, and Libya could change the world’s energy map. The export capacity of these countries would be of a different order of magnitude from that of the United States. As Iran and Iraq, two of OPEC’s founding members, increase production, other members of the organization will have to curtail their own production to maintain quotas. Saudi Arabia would be the most likely candidate. Moreover, geopolitical differences and regional grievances make the effect of a marginal barrel of oil from Iran and Iraq more unpredictable in the eyes of Riyadh than additional oil supplies from the United States. Even more worrying for **Saudi Arabia** is the country’s growing domestic consumption of oil, which is currently estimated to be 24 percent of its total annual production. The kingdom **uses oil** and its derivatives **for** about **half of its electricity production**, which, at peak rates, is growing by about seven percent a year. By the late 2020s, Saudi Arabia will consume more oil than it exports. Domestic energy prices are heavily subsidized, which dampens the efficient allocation of resources. They weigh on the government’s budget and encourage capital-intensive industries to the detriment of employment-intensive activities. If consumption continues apace, Saudi Arabia could eat all of its extra oil capacity and, consequently, lose its role as oil-market bulwark. The situation will become even more dangerous as a larger global energy supply puts downward pressure on prices. It is no secret that **the oil market is the main source of political risk for Saudi Arabia**. But **for now**, large **buffers provide** **ample fiscal breathing room.** Saudi Arabia’s foreign assets are about the size of its 2013 GDP -- $745 billion -- and its public-debt-to-GDP ratio is among the world’s lowest -- 2.6 percent. The country can withstand any price shock that is not sustained over long periods (but even the short dive in oil prices in 2009 to $33 per barrel was uncomfortable). And Riyadh is mindful of the direction of oil prices. Not long ago, the break-even price for Saudi Arabia’s finances was $40 per barrel; today, it is around $90 per barrel, assuming production at 9.5 million barrels per day. The world is in the middle of a shale oil revolution, and exuberant commentary about the United States’ looming oil independence has become increasingly common. It is easy to go from mindless jabbering about oil scarcity and peak oil to chatter about oil plenty. The truth lies somewhere in the middle. Hydraulic fracturing is revolutionizing the energy map in North America and has the potential to do the same elsewhere if governments offer the right incentives. Riyadh does not stand to lose much, but it cannot brush aside the possibility that Iraq, Iran, and Libya will become much bigger suppliers. For Saudi Arabia, domestic energy consumption is the only variable it can control. It needs to get that right to maintain its role as a stabilizing force in global oil markets. Though Saudi Arabia’s position remains strong, nothing lasts foreve

B. Links: Depressed oil revenues short circuits the welfare state that pacifies popular revolt- AND outweighs on probability- eastern provinces reliant on revenues are already sympathetic to Iran. Babbin[[2]](#footnote-2) ‘14

There are so many trouble spots in the world, it is comforting to know — or at least to believe — that[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/)isn’t one of them. Until the United States surpassed the kingdom a few months ago,[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/)was the world’s biggest producer of oil, a country of enormous wealth and the beneficiary of perhaps the largest wealth transfer in history. It appears a stable monolith. It was untouched by the revolutionary movements of so-called “Arab Spring,” while nations such as[Syria](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/syria/),[Egypt](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/egypt/)and[Libya](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/libya/)saw their governments toppled, their economies ravaged and, in the worst case, the eruption of bloody civil war. However, **Saudi stability is a myth**. As I wrote in “The Sunni Vanguard,”[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/)is neither monolithic nor stable. If we look ahead three to five years, its regime may well **be destabilized by domestic** or foreign **forces**. The reasons for Saudi instability are not what you might expect. Though the age disparity between the rulers and the ruled is greater than in almost any other nation, the death of[King Abdullah](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/abdullah/)(now almost 90) is not likely to set off a war of succession because his probable successors would not govern differently from him.**Abdullah has been spending lavishly on social programs to keep the populace quiet**. ***This******may be* a seed of long-term instability because that spending has created a generation of younger Saudis** who are **accustomed to being unproductive**. Moreover, the worst-kept secret in Washington is that — as a famously leaked[State Department](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/department-of-state/)cable says — **they have been** lavishly **subsidizing Sunni terrorist groups** for many years. Within the next three to five years,[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/)faces serious threats from abroad. The authors of these problems are the United States,[Iran](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/)and the Saudis themselves.The Saudis have spoken harshly of President Obama’s foreign policy as it affects[Syria](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/syria/)and[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/). The Saudis correctly view the Syrian civil war as[Iran](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/)’s attempt to plant a Shiite proxy on their border. They have done everything short of sending troops to[Syria](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/syria/)to oppose the regime of[Bashar Assad](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/bashar-assad/)in the civil war. They have publicly divorced themselves from President Obama’s now-failed diplomatic initiative designed to remove[Mr. Assad](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/bashar-assad/)’s chemical weapons and have made it very clear that they will go their own way, leaving America powerless in the region. **The Saudis** rightly fear that the Syrian civil war will likely result in a new version of Mr.[Assad](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/bashar-assad/)’s regime, under the thumb of[Iran](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/)and Russia, with the power to project insurgent attacks penetrating Iraq and then across the Saudi border. What they **fear most,** however, is that it may be within[Iran](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/)’s power to create **a revolt within**[**Saudi Arabia**](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/).[Iran](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/)has every reason to do so in retaliation for[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/)’s opposition to[Iran](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/)’s attempt to turn[Syria](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/syria/)into a satellite state, with the help of the Assad government and Russia. When Shiite forces threatened Bahrain in 2011, Saudi troops helped the Sunni government restore order. Bahrain is on the eastern border of[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/). **The** popular majority in the **eastern Saudi provinces**, **where** much of the kingdom’s **oil reserves and export facilities sit, is Shiite**. As such, **they have no loyalty to the Saudi regime and could** **be** **the lever for**[**Iran**](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/)**to instigate a revolt against the Saudi government**.Last but not least in evaluating Saudi instability is the certain advent of[Iran](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/)’s nuclear arms With the nuclear deal Mr. Obama has made with[Iran](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iran/), he has set[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/)adrift in search of its own nuclear weapons. When[Saudi Arabia](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/saudi-arabia/)unravels, it will signal — with one exception — the end of America’s ability to affect events in the Middle East. The exception will be our ability to help Israel defend itself.

C. Impact: Collapse causes unrest in 9 countries and immediate shocks to the global economy, spurs terrorism and collapse of US hegemony- multiple specific scenarios for spillover. Riedel[[3]](#footnote-3) ‘13

Saudi Arabia is the world’s last absolute monarchy. Like Louis XIV,[King Abdullah has complete authority](http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/06/24/a-game-of-thrones-in-saudi-arabian-succession-plans.html)to do as he likes. But while a revolution in Saudi Arabia is still not likely, the Arab Awakening has made one possible for the first time, and it could come in President Obama’s second term.**Revolutionary change in the kingdom would be a disaster** for American interests across the board. Saudi Arabia is America’s oldest ally in the Middle East, a partnership that dates to 1945. The United States has no serious option for heading off a revolution if it is coming; we are already too deeply wedded to the kingdom. Obama should ensure the best possible intelligence is available to see a crisis coming and then try to ride the storm.Still , the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a proven survivor. Two earlier Saudi kingdoms were defeated by the Ottoman Empire and eradicated. The Sauds came back. They survived a wave of revolutions against Arab monarchies in the 1950s and 1960s. A jihadist coup attempt in 1979 seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca but was crushed. Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda staged a four-year insurrection to topple the Sauds and failed less than a decade ago. Saudi al Qaeda cadres remain in the kingdom and next door in Yemen.Today the Arab Awakening presents the kingdom with its most severe test to date. The same demographic challenges that prompted revolution in Egypt and Yemen, a very young population and very high underemployment, apply in Saudi Arabia.[Extreme gender discrimination](http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/07/29/women-rise-up-in-saudi-arabia-the-rebellion-behind-the-veil.html), long-standing regional differences, and a restive Shia minority add to the explosive potential. In recognition of their vulnerability, the Saudi royals have spent more than $130 billion since the Arab Awakening began to try to buy off dissent at home. They have made cosmetic reforms to let women sit in a powerless consulting council.Abroad they have sent tanks and troops across the King Fahd Causeway to stifle revolution in Bahrain, brokered a political deal in Yemen to replace Ali Abdullah Salih with his deputy, and sought closer unity among the six Gulf Cooperation Council monarchies. They also have invited Jordan and Morocco to join the kings’ club. But they are pragmatists too and have backed revolutions in Libya and Syria that fight old enemies of the kingdom.If an awakening takes place in Saudi Arabia, it will probably look a lot like the revolutions in the other Arab states. Already demonstrations, peaceful and violent, have wracked the oil rich Eastern Province for more than a year. These are Shia protests and thus atypical of the rest of the kingdom. Shia dissidents in ARAMCO, the Saudi oil company, also have used cyberwarfare to attack its computer systems, crashing more than 30,000 work stations this August. They probably received Iranian help.Much more disturbing to the royals would be **protests in Sunni parts** of the kingdom. These **might start in** **the** so-called **Quran Belt** north of the capital, **where dissent is endemic,** or in the poor Asir province on the Yemeni border. Once they begin, **they could** **snowball and reach** the **major cities** of the Hejaz, including Jeddah, Mecca,[Taif](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/01/14/nightmare-in-saudi-arabia-the-plight-of-foreign-migrant-workers.html), and Medina. The Saudi opposition has a vibrant information technology component that could ensure rapid communication of dissent within the kingdom and to the outside world.The critical defender of the regime would be **the National Guard**. Abdullah has spent his life building this Praetorian elite force. The United States has trained and equipped it with tens of billions in helicopters and armored vehicles. But the key unknown is whether the Guard will shoot on its brothers and sisters in the street. It **may fragment** **or** it may simply **refuse to suppress dissent** if it is largely peaceful, especially at the start.The succession issue adds another layer of complication. Every succession in the kingdom since its founder, Abdel Aziz bin Saud, died in 1953 has been to his brothers. King Abdullah and Crown Prince Salman are the end of the brood; only a couple of possible remaining half brothers are suitable. Both the king and crown prince are ill, and both are often unfit for duty. If Abdullah and/or Salman die as unrest begins—a real possibility—and a succession crisis ensues, then the kingdom could be even more vulnerable to revolution.As in other Arab revolutions, the opposition revolutionaries will not be united on anything except ousting the monarchy. There will be secular democrats but also al Qaeda elements in the opposition. Trying to pick and choose will be very difficult. The **unity** of the kingdom **could collapse as** the **Hejaz separates** from the rest, **the east falls to Shia, and the center becomes a jihadist stronghold**.For the United States, revolution in Saudi Arabia would be a game changer. While **the U.S. can live withou**t **Saudi oil, China, India, Japan, and Europe cannot**. **Any disruption** **in** Saudi **oil** exports—whether **due to unrest**, cyberattacks, **or a** new regime’s **decision to reduce exports** substantially—**will have a major impact on the global economy**. In addition, **the** CIA **war against al Qaeda is heavily dependent on the kingdom**: **Saudi** **intelligence** operations **foiled the last** two **attacks** **by a**l **Q**aeda in the **A**rabian **P**eninsula on the American homeland. **The U.S. military** training **mission** in the kingdom, founded in 1953, **is the largest of its kind** in the world. **The Saudis** also **have been** a **key** player **in containing Iran** for decades.**The other monarchs of Arabia**, meanwhile, **would be in jeopardy** if revolution comes to Saudi Arabia. The Sunni minority in **Bahrain could not last without Saudi money** and tanks. Despite all their money, **Qatar, Kuwait, and the U**nited **A**rab **E**mirates are city states that **would be unable to defend themselves** against a revolutionary regime in what had been the kingdom. **The Hashemite dynasty in Jordan would be at risk** as well **without Saudi** and Gulf **money and oil**. Only Oman is probably isolated and strong enough to endure.America has no serious options for effecting gradual reform in the kingdom. The Saudis fear, probably rightly, that real power sharing is impossible in an absolutist state. But we should plan very quietly for the worst. The intelligence community should be directed to make internal developments, not just counterterrorism, its top priority in the kingdom now. We cannot afford a surprise like Iran in 1978, and we need to know the players in the opposition, especially the Wahhabi clerics, in depth. This will be a formidable challenge, but it is essential to preparing for a very dark swa

# 1NC Shell (Prolif)

A. UQ: Demand for Saudi oil is up and expected to rise- provides reserve for supply crises and is the backbone of political stability in the Kingdom. Sfakianakis[[4]](#footnote-4) ‘14

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Unpredictable oil prices and a collapse in revenues in the 1980s and 1990s made Saudi Arabia particularly wary of uncertainty. Over the next few years, the increase in energy production in far-flung locations and diverse sources, including from shale, will help mitigate those swings. Eventually, increased supply will also help create stable new price floor for oil, which is now estimated to cost around $80 per barrel. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has little reason to worry about its position as the world’s supplier of last resort. Historically, **Saudi Arabia has maintained** more than **half** of **the world’s spare capacity**, even if markets did not put it to use all the time. In the future, too, **its** more than two million barrels of oil **reserves** will **prove crucial when**ever **a supply crisis erupts.** Markets that have traditionally relied on Saudi Arabia will continue to do so; and **no other country is likely to** be able to ramp up production capacity enough to **amass such a large reserve**, especially since more than a few of them have outsized domestic demand that they will struggle to meet. Since demand for oil is set to grow, Riyadh does not see U.S. shale oil production as competition. **Asia’s demand for oil will soar** over the next two decades**. According to the E**nergy **I**nformation **A**gency, from 2010 to 2040, **demand** from countries that are not members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development **will increase** by **19.3 million barrels**. And between 2011 and 2030, **China** alone will increase its oil consumption **by** as much as **66 percent** and **India** **by** more than **100 percent**. 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Moreover, geopolitical differences and regional grievances make the effect of a marginal barrel of oil from Iran and Iraq more unpredictable in the eyes of Riyadh than additional oil supplies from the United States. Even more worrying for **Saudi Arabia** is the country’s growing domestic consumption of oil, which is currently estimated to be 24 percent of its total annual production. The kingdom **uses oil** and its derivatives **for** about **half of its electricity production**, which, at peak rates, is growing by about seven percent a year. By the late 2020s, Saudi Arabia will consume more oil than it exports. Domestic energy prices are heavily subsidized, which dampens the efficient allocation of resources. They weigh on the government’s budget and encourage capital-intensive industries to the detriment of employment-intensive activities. If consumption continues apace, Saudi Arabia could eat all of its extra oil capacity and, consequently, lose its role as oil-market bulwark. 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B. Links: Oil revenue is crucial for regime stability- empirically stopped the spread of the Arab Spring and provides employment for youth most likely to revolt- the Kingdom is on track with gradual reforms but maintaining current production levels is key- communication advances and fiscal limits triggers unprecedented instability. This evidence is untouchable - I have uniqueness for each internal link and the consensus of academic experts. Wehrey et al[[5]](#footnote-5) ‘13

Saudi Arabia appears, on the surface, to have escaped the Arab Uprisings untouched. Yet its political trajectory and future stability remain uncertain. The kingdom is not immune to rising pressures, from concerns about wages and unemployment to the effects of social media activism, sectarianism, and the price of oil. Are government responses to these pressures indicative of an impending change or a sign of state strength? Five experts on Saudi Arabia discuss the kingdom's prospects for maintaining stability. Each provides a different perspective on a particular set of domestic issues and government responses. The Eastern Province: A Bellwether for the Kingdom Frederic Wehrey Two years **after** **the** start of the **Arab uprisings**, the threat of **regional chaos** has **helped** **shield** **the house of Saud from** the **dissent** brewing **at home**. In a time-worn strategy, **the** **ruling family** has skillfully **portrayed itself as a bulwark against** the specter of communal strife and **civil war** brought about by rapid and uncontrolled political change. Regional sectarian tensions—exacerbated by Sunni clerics and state-owned media—have spilled over, casting a chill over cooperation and coordination between Sunni and Shia activists in the Kingdom —to the benefit of the monarchy. In tandem, **a campaign of massive** **subsidies and carefully calibrated reforms has been used to produce consent among an** **increasingly restive younger generation**.

A key question confronting the kingdom now is whether the diminishing returns from such a strategy are sufficient in light of **spreading disenchantmen**t that **could**, at some point, **mutate** into something more serious. Among activists and reformists across the country, **there** **is** **the growing sense that** the National Dialogue and municipal council **elections** **were** fundamentally **hollow reforms** that yielded little in the way of actual political or economic change. Confronted with a regime that has typically presented itself as a gatekeeper for dialogue among the kingdom’s sects and regions, these young activists have found new spaces in social media to share ideas and find common ground. So far, such activity has not yielded anything resembling a coherent popular movement or political force. That said, a number of **grievances have arisen** that are shared by disparate sectors of Saudi society: **low wages, unemployment, infrastructural neglect** at the municipal and provincial level, and—perhaps most importantly—protests over the incarceration of political dissidents. On top of this, the previous tools of social control—familial and clerical authority—may be showing the strains of overuse. If there is one corner of Saudi Arabia that provides a laboratory for observing these dynamics at work, it is the Eastern Province, which has witnessed sustained and seldom-reported protests since 2011. True, the region carries its own unique grievances related to sectarian discrimination against its Shia citizens. But many of the protesters’ calls are echoed by activists elsewhere in the country, albeit at lower decibel levels: the release of political prisoners, greater power for elected municipal councils, an independent judiciary, a constitution, and economic reforms. In this respect, the province should not be treated solely as an isolated pocket of discontent, but rather a sort of bellwether for the overall health of the country. Frederic Wehrey, senior associate in the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and author of Sectarian Politics in the Gulf: From the Iraq War to the Arab Uprisings. Stable for Now F. Gregory Gause Ironically, questions about Saudi stability tend to arise after the Saudi regime has recently demonstrated its resiliency in the face of regional crisis—and the Arab Spring is no exception.There are two central reasons that **Riyadh** was the major Arab state **least affected by** the **upheavals** of the last few years. The first is that it has plenty of money in the bank. **Only** **one** major **oil exporter**, **Libya**, **faced** a regime-shaking **crisis** in 2011, and **the** **regime** there **fell because of external intervention**. Because **the Saudis** (and other oil exporters) had enjoyed a ten-year period of rising prices, the **skids of the patronage** state **were** well **greased**. To remind everyone of how good they have it, King **Abdullah** **committed to spending $130 billion on** such **public provisions** as education allowances, unemployment benefits, higher wages, and low-income housing—even **as demonstrations were gaining** **momentum** around the region. That commitment put a dent in Saudi financial reserves (which total approximately $700 billion), but hardly exhausted them. The second reason explaining Saudi stability is the presence of serious divisions in Saudi society along sectarian, regional, and ideological lines. Disparate groups in Egypt and Tunisia could put their differences aside and come together against their dictators because their common national identity is relatively strong, while postponing the fights for power we see in those countries now. In Saudi Arabia, potential axes of regime opposition do not have the levels of contact and trust to join forces against the regime.What could change the picture of Saudi stability? Obviously, **a dramatic** and sustained **reduction** **in** the price of **oil** **would** eventually **lead to a fiscal crisis in the Kingdom**, **calling** **into** **question** **the patronage base of the regime**. A serious split in the ruling family, when power finally passes to the next generation of princes, could also shake the regime. If the two scenarios happened simultaneously, the **chances of regime survival** would **decrease markedly**. F. Gregory Gause, professor of political science at the University of Vermont and a senior non-resident fellow at Brooking’s Doha Center.  Oil, Jobs, and Long Term Stability Steffen Hertog **There** **can be no revolution without** a deep socio-**economic crisis**. Saudi Arabia hasn’t had such a crisis yet. **On** **the back of** its large **oil revenues** and even larger overseas financial reserves, **it can provide** enough **employment for young male job-seekers—the crucial segment of the population**—in the public sector **to defuse** any **large-scale revolutionary anger.**  The **sustainability** of this policy **depends on** simple arithmetic: oil prices and **production levels** on one hand, and domestic employment and subsidy costs on the other. The latter have been increasing rapidly and are likely to continue doing so, albeit at a more measured pace, due to continued growth of the working-age population. But even under pessimistic oil price assumptions, **the kingdom will not run out of money for at least a dozen years**. For the time being, it continues to run significant surpluses, as the oil price at which the government breaks even lies around $80 per barrel, a good deal below current prices. While the kingdom’s mid-term outlook is the envy of its non-oil-producing peers in the region, the long-run outlook is cloudy if not bleak. The spending binge since the mid-2000s has made economic activity more dependent on the state budget. The share of private sector wages in GDP lies below 10 percent, compared to 40-50 percent in mature economies, meaning little self-sustained demand is generated. Most private sector jobs continue to be held by foreigners. In 2011, less than 400,000 of 4 million expatriate-held jobs in the private sector paid a salary of more than 3,000 Saudi Riyals ($800). This means that at prevailing wage levels, there were precious few positions for which Saudis would even consider applying, let alone successfully compete against migrant job seekers. Recent government efforts forcing employers to increase their share of Saudi employees have increased the number of privately employed nationals, but the new quota system is complex and hard to monitor; employers have developed a variety of evasion techniques. As long as an open migration system forces nationals to compete with Asian workers at rock-bottom wages, businesses will have strong incentives to prefer foreigners, undercutting the private sector job creation for nationals that is needed for long-term stability. The use of low-cost labor has also led to stagnating or declining productivity, moving the kingdom away from the post-oil “knowledge economy” it strives to build. In the long run, Saudi Arabia will have to undergo a painful shift away from both public sector over-employment and dependence on migrant labor. Such a shift means short-term pain for both citizens and business. Times are probably too good to impose such pain right now. **Once the state reaches** its **fiscal limits**, however, **the forced shift away from state dependence would be** all the more **sudden and violent**. This does not guarantee revolution, but **it would mean** potential for **serious instability for the first time in decades**. Steffen Hertog, senior lecturer at the London School of Economics and Political Science and author of Princes, Brokers, and Bureaucrats.

Looming Political Shift Christopher Davidson One of the most active current Twitter conversations, loosely translated as Salaries are not enough, is almost entirely Saudi-based and is mostly in Arabic. With hundreds of tweets per second and millions per week, it is causing great alarm within elite circles and in many ways encapsulates the multitude of problems that the Al Saud regime is now facing. The size, content, and voracity of the debate caught the international media’s attention. Complaining of ever-growing wealth inequalities across the kingdom, along with rising poverty, corruption, and unemployment, the conversation is helping prove that Saudi Arabia’s social contract with its citizens is now publicly coming unstuck. More importantly, it is also demonstrating that powerful new modernizing forces—in this case globalizing **communications technologies** that can neither be co-opted nor controlled by the state—**are having a huge impact on** a restless, hitherto traditional **society** that now enjoys one of the highest broadband and smartphone penetration rates in the world. Indeed, Saudi Arabia now generates more tweets per capita than the United States. **Able** **to access** new **media platforms** that finally allow for unfettered free speech, **and** undoubtedly **emboldened by the demonstration effect** of mass uprisings and denunciations of authoritarian rulers in neighboring states, **Saudis**—from all walks of life and regardless of sect—**are** undoubtedly **mobilizing**. Even members of the ruling family are breaking ranks and wading in, with some describing the ‘looming crisis’ and others publishing open letters of ‘defection.’ What’s also clear is that the kingdom’s enormous Arab Spring public spending program—now amounting to hundreds of billions spent on subsidies, welfare, and public sector job schemes—isn’t having the desired effect. Clearly hoping that the uprisings of 2011 would be a short blip and that the ongoing revolutions—notably in Syria and Egypt—could be ‘managed’ by Saudi wealth injections, the aim was to pacify the backyard and buy the political acquiescence of citizens until the storm had passed, even if it meant pushing up the breakeven oil price and increasing the kingdom’s now perilous dependency on global oil demand. The reality, however, is that a fundamental shift in political order is now taking place across the region, and in many ways is just beginning. Large, youthful populations are signalling their discontent with opaque authoritarian politics and the mismanagement of national resources. There is no valid academic explanation for why Saudi Arabia should remain exceptional to this shift. Christopher Davidson, lecturer of Middle East Politics at Durham University and author of After the Sheikhs.

C. Internal Links:

1. DA outweighs on probability- Saudi Arabia is on the path to the bomb and war with Iran- the perception of instability fuels conflict. Hannah[[6]](#footnote-6) ‘13

Pundits and policymakers are missing the big worry about the Obama administration's Iranian nuclear deal: its greatest impact is not ensuring that Iran doesn't get the bomb, but that the Saudis will.

Indeed, **the risk of arms race in the Middle East -- on a nuclear hair trigger** -- **just went up** rather dramatically. And it increasingly looks like **the** coming **Sunni-Shiite war will be nuclearized.**

Two aspects of the agreement, in particular, will consolidate Saudi fears that an Iranian bomb is now almost certainly coming to a theater near them. First, the pre-emptive concession that the comprehensive solution still to be negotiated will leave Iran with a permanent capability to enrich uranium -- the key component of any program to develop nuclear weapons. In the blink of an eye, and without adequate notice or explanation to key allies who believe their national existence hangs in the balance, the United States appears to have fatally compromised the long-standing, legally-binding requirements of at least five United Nations Security Council resolutions. If the Saudis needed any confirmation that last month's rejection of a Security Council seat was merited -- on grounds that U.S. retrenchment has rendered the organization not just irrelevant, but increasingly dangerous to the kingdom's core interests -- they just got it, in spades. Second, the agreement suggests that even the comprehensive solution will be time-limited. In other words, whatever restrictions are eventually imposed on Iran's nuclear program won't be permanent. The implication is quite clear: At a point in time still to be negotiated (three years, five, ten?) and long after the international sanctions regime has been dismantled, the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear program will be left unshackled, free to enjoy the same rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty as any other member in good standing. That looks an awful lot like a license to one day build an industrial-size nuclear program, if Iran so chooses, with largely unlimited ability to enrich uranium and reprocess plutonium, a la Japan.

But of course **Iran** is not Japan -- a peaceful, stable democracy aligned with the West. It is a bloody-minded, terror-sponsoring, hegemony-seeking revisionist power that has serially violated its non-proliferation commitments and which **aims** **to** destroy Israel, drive America out of the Middle East, and **bring down the House of Saud**.Whether or not President Obama fully appreciates that distinction, the Saudis most definitely do.Of course, Saudi concerns extend well beyond the four corners of last week's agreement. **For Riyadh, Iran's march to**ward **the bomb is** only the most dangerous element -- **the *coup de grace*** in its expanding arsenal, if you will -- **of an** **ongoing**, region-wide **campaign to overturn the Middle East's existing order** in favor of one dominated by Tehran. **The** **destabilization** and weakening **of Saudi Arabia is** absolutely **central to that project**, and in Saudi eyes has been manifested in a systematic effort by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to extend its influence and tentacles near and far, by sowing violence, sabotage, terror, and insurrection -- in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and most destructively of all, in the IRGC's massive intervention to abet the slaughter in Syria and salvage the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Fairly or not, from the Saudi perspective, the nuclear deal not only ignores these central elements of the existential challenge that Iran poses to the kingdom's well-being, it threatens to greatly exacerbate them by elevating and legitimizing the Islamic Republic's claim to great power status. As surely as Obama's chemical weapons deal with Syria implicitly green-lighted the intensification of the Assad regime's murder machine, so, too, **the Saudis fear**, a nuclear deal with the mullahs will grant a free hand -- if not an implicit American imprimatur -- to **the** long-standing **Iranian quest for regional supremacy that**, to Saudi minds, **won't end until it reaches Mecca** and Medina.   It should be said that Saudi paranoia about being sacrificed on the altar of a U.S.-Iranian deal is nothing new. But the fact is that, today, the Saudis look around and believe they've got more reasons than ever before to think that they're largely on their own. As the saying goes, even paranoids have enemies. On one issue after another that they've deemed absolutely vital to their interests -- Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and now Iran -- the Saudis view the Obama administration as having been at best indifferent to their most urgent concerns, and at worst openly hostile. To Saudi minds, a very clear and dangerous pattern has now been conclusively established. And its defining characteristic is not pretty at all to behold: the selling out of longtime allies, even betrayal. Indeed, the Saudi listen to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rail against the Iran deal and realize that even Israel, by leaps and bounds America's foremost friend in the Middle East, is not immune. And they wonder where in the world does that leave them. How do you say "screwed" in Arabic? The crisis of confidence in the reliability, purposes, and competence of American power has reached an all-time high. The Saudis have taken due note of National Security Advisor Susan Rice's declaration that "[there's a whole world out there](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/world/middleeast/rice-offers-a-more-modest-strategy-for-mideast.html?_r=0" \t "_blank)" beyond the Middle East that needs attention, and her predecessor's lament that the United States had "[over-invested](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/08/15/us-egypt-policy-priorities/2662285/" \t "_blank)" in the region. **The kingdom has become** increasingly **convinced** that **there's a** method to Obama's madness, **a systematic effort to reduce America's** exposure and **involvement in the region**'s conflicts, to downsize Washington's role and leadership, to retrench and, yes, to retreat. Whatever the reason -- a weak and unprincipled president, a tired and fed up population, a broken economy and dysfunctional politics, growing energy independence (the Saudis cite all these and more) -- there's a growing conviction in Riyadh that the United States has run dangerously short of breath when it comes to standing by its allies in the Middle East. Obama wants out. Face-saving deals on issues like Syria and Iran that are designed not to resolve the region's most dangerous problems, but rather to defer them from exploding until he's safely out of office are the order of the day -- Saudi vital interests be damned ... or so they fear.   It must be noted that the breach in trust has become intensely personal. The Saudi dismay with Obama and his chief lieutenants is hard to overstate at this point. Secretary of State John Kerry in particular has become a target of derision. In the days immediately following the Assad regime's Aug. 21 chemical weapons attack, the phone calls between Kerry and senior Saudi leaders apparently ran fast and furious. Proof that Syria had smashed Obama's red line on chemical weapons was overwhelming, Kerry assured his interlocutors. A U.S. attack to punish the Assad regime was a sure thing. The Saudis were ecstatic, convinced that at long last Obama was prepared to get off the sidelines and decisively shift the conflict's trajectory in favor of the West and against Iran. Intelligence, war planning and targeting information were allegedly exchanged. Hints abound that the Saudis were ginned up not only to help finance the operation, but to participate actively with planes and bombs of their own. King Abdullah is rumored to have ordered relevant ministries to prepare to go to the Saudi equivalent of DEFCON 2, the level just short of war. Then, on Aug. 31, the Saudis turned on CNN, expecting to watch President Obama announce the imminent enforcement of his red-line -- only to see him flinch by handing the decision off to Congress. The Saudis were enraged, dumbfounded, and convinced that Kerry had deliberately deceived and misled them. Told that Kerry himself had been caught largely unaware by Obama's decision, the Saudis were hardly mollified. A liar or an irrelevancy? Either one was disastrous from their perspective. Unfortunately, the routine has repeated itself several times since -- on one issue after another considered critical to Saudi interests. Hence: Riyadh learned about the U.S.-Russia deal on Syria's chemical weapons from CNN. Riyadh learned about Obama's decision to suspend large chunks of military assistance to Egypt from CNN. And two weeks ago, Riyadh learned that the P5+1 was on the verge of signing an initial (and from its perspective, very bad) deal with Iran from CNN -- even though Kerry had just been in Saudi Arabia*earlier that week*in an effort to contain at least some of the fallout from the Syria fiasco. Instead, he ended up doubling down on the breach. Detailed revelations in recent days that for the better part of a year, the Obama administration has been [engaged](http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2013/11/26/john-kerry-developed-secret-dialogue-with-iran-through-oman/rRBZZ8aeDrsP2Q2HdoWJEJ/story.html" \t "_blank) in secret bilateral talks with Iran that it sought to keep hidden from its allies -- while merely adding detail to what the Saudis had already suspected from their own sources -- will no doubt only further stoke the kingdom's fears that the fix is in between Washington and the mullahs. An atmosphere this poisonous is dangerous, to say the least. The incentive for the Saudis to engage in all kinds of self-help that Washington would find less than beneficial, even destructive, is significant and rising. Driven into a corner, feeling largely abandoned by their traditional superpower patron, no one should doubt that the Saudis will do what they believe is necessary to ensure their survival. It would be a mistake to underestimate their capacity to deliver some very unpleasant surprises: from the groups they feel compelled to support in their escalating proxy war with Iran, to the price of oil, to their sponsorship (and bankrolling) of a much expanded regional role for Russia and China at America's expense. Convincing ourselves that the Saudis will bitch and moan, but in the end prove powerless to act in ways that harm key U.S. interests would be a very risky strategy. Which brings us to the question of the Saudi bomb. King **Abdullah** **has been unequivocal** with a series of high-level interlocutors going back several years: **If Iran gets the bomb, we get the bomb**. There's not much artifice to the man. He's been clear. He's been consistent. He's not known to bluff. And I believe him. Whether or not all the stories about the[longstanding arrangements](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/11/08/the_nuclear_handshake_saudi_arabia_pakistan)with the Pakistani nuclear program are true, there's enough of a link there that no one should be too shocked if we wake up next week, next month, or next year to discover that a small nuclear arsenal has suddenly shown up in the Saudi order of battle. If the prospect of an Israel-Iran nuclear standoff doesn't quite get your pulse to racing, how do you feel about adding a Saudi-Iran standoff to the mix? **Think of two nuclear powers** eyeball to eyeball **across the Strait of Hormuz -- with religious hatreds** boiling over, **ballistic missile** **flight times measured in minutes, and command and control protocols**, well, **less than robust**. Even short of a nuclear exchange, what do you think that would do to the price premium on a barrel of oil? Can anyone say "instant global recession"?

2. Collapse causes unrest in 9 countries and immediate shocks to the global economy, spurs terrorism and collapse of US hegemony- multiple specific scenarios for spillover. Riedel[[7]](#footnote-7) ‘13

Saudi Arabia is the world’s last absolute monarchy. Like Louis XIV,[King Abdullah has complete authority](http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/06/24/a-game-of-thrones-in-saudi-arabian-succession-plans.html)to do as he likes. But while a revolution in Saudi Arabia is still not likely, the Arab Awakening has made one possible for the first time, and it could come in President Obama’s second term.**Revolutionary change in the kingdom would be a disaster** for American interests across the board. Saudi Arabia is America’s oldest ally in the Middle East, a partnership that dates to 1945. The United States has no serious option for heading off a revolution if it is coming; we are already too deeply wedded to the kingdom. Obama should ensure the best possible intelligence is available to see a crisis coming and then try to ride the storm.Still , the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a proven survivor. Two earlier Saudi kingdoms were defeated by the Ottoman Empire and eradicated. The Sauds came back. They survived a wave of revolutions against Arab monarchies in the 1950s and 1960s. A jihadist coup attempt in 1979 seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca but was crushed. Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda staged a four-year insurrection to topple the Sauds and failed less than a decade ago. Saudi al Qaeda cadres remain in the kingdom and next door in Yemen.Today the Arab Awakening presents the kingdom with its most severe test to date. The same demographic challenges that prompted revolution in Egypt and Yemen, a very young population and very high underemployment, apply in Saudi Arabia.[Extreme gender discrimination](http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/07/29/women-rise-up-in-saudi-arabia-the-rebellion-behind-the-veil.html), long-standing regional differences, and a restive Shia minority add to the explosive potential. In recognition of their vulnerability, the Saudi royals have spent more than $130 billion since the Arab Awakening began to try to buy off dissent at home. They have made cosmetic reforms to let women sit in a powerless consulting council.Abroad they have sent tanks and troops across the King Fahd Causeway to stifle revolution in Bahrain, brokered a political deal in Yemen to replace Ali Abdullah Salih with his deputy, and sought closer unity among the six Gulf Cooperation Council monarchies. They also have invited Jordan and Morocco to join the kings’ club. But they are pragmatists too and have backed revolutions in Libya and Syria that fight old enemies of the kingdom.If an awakening takes place in Saudi Arabia, it will probably look a lot like the revolutions in the other Arab states. Already demonstrations, peaceful and violent, have wracked the oil rich Eastern Province for more than a year. These are Shia protests and thus atypical of the rest of the kingdom. Shia dissidents in ARAMCO, the Saudi oil company, also have used cyberwarfare to attack its computer systems, crashing more than 30,000 work stations this August. They probably received Iranian help.Much more disturbing to the royals would be **protests in Sunni parts** of the kingdom. These **might start in** **the** so-called **Quran Belt** north of the capital, **where dissent is endemic,** or in the poor Asir province on the Yemeni border. Once they begin, **they could** **snowball and reach** the **major cities** of the Hejaz, including Jeddah, Mecca,[Taif](http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/01/14/nightmare-in-saudi-arabia-the-plight-of-foreign-migrant-workers.html), and Medina. The Saudi opposition has a vibrant information technology component that could ensure rapid communication of dissent within the kingdom and to the outside world.The critical defender of the regime would be **the National Guard**. Abdullah has spent his life building this Praetorian elite force. The United States has trained and equipped it with tens of billions in helicopters and armored vehicles. But the key unknown is whether the Guard will shoot on its brothers and sisters in the street. It **may fragment** **or** it may simply **refuse to suppress dissent** if it is largely peaceful, especially at the start.The succession issue adds another layer of complication. Every succession in the kingdom since its founder, Abdel Aziz bin Saud, died in 1953 has been to his brothers. King Abdullah and Crown Prince Salman are the end of the brood; only a couple of possible remaining half brothers are suitable. Both the king and crown prince are ill, and both are often unfit for duty. If Abdullah and/or Salman die as unrest begins—a real possibility—and a succession crisis ensues, then the kingdom could be even more vulnerable to revolution.As in other Arab revolutions, the opposition revolutionaries will not be united on anything except ousting the monarchy. There will be secular democrats but also al Qaeda elements in the opposition. Trying to pick and choose will be very difficult. The **unity** of the kingdom **could collapse as** the **Hejaz separates** from the rest, **the east falls to Shia, and the center becomes a jihadist stronghold**.For the United States, revolution in Saudi Arabia would be a game changer. While **the U.S. can live withou**t **Saudi oil, China, India, Japan, and Europe cannot**. **Any disruption** **in** Saudi **oil** exports—whether **due to unrest**, cyberattacks, **or a** new regime’s **decision to reduce exports** substantially—**will have a major impact on the global economy**. In addition, **the** CIA **war against al Qaeda is heavily dependent on the kingdom**: **Saudi** **intelligence** operations **foiled the last** two **attacks** **by a**l **Q**aeda in the **A**rabian **P**eninsula on the American homeland. **The U.S. military** training **mission** in the kingdom, founded in 1953, **is the largest of its kind** in the world. **The Saudis** also **have been** a **key** player **in containing Iran** for decades.**The other monarchs of Arabia**, meanwhile, **would be in jeopardy** if revolution comes to Saudi Arabia. The Sunni minority in **Bahrain could not last without Saudi money** and tanks. Despite all their money, **Qatar, Kuwait, and the U**nited **A**rab **E**mirates are city states that **would be unable to defend themselves** against a revolutionary regime in what had been the kingdom. **The Hashemite dynasty in Jordan would be at risk** as well **without Saudi** and Gulf **money and oil**. Only Oman is probably isolated and strong enough to endure.America has no serious options for effecting gradual reform in the kingdom. The Saudis fear, probably rightly, that real power sharing is impossible in an absolutist state. But we should plan very quietly for the worst. The intelligence community should be directed to make internal developments, not just counterterrorism, its top priority in the kingdom now. We cannot afford a surprise like Iran in 1978, and we need to know the players in the opposition, especially the Wahhabi clerics, in depth. This will be a formidable challenge, but it is essential to preparing for a very dark swan.

D. Impacts: Extinction. Hogan[[8]](#footnote-8)

In the fall of 1983, a group of scientists led by Carl Sagan introduced a new strain of apocalyptic discourse into the freeze debate: the rhetoric of nuclear winter. Simply stated, the theory of nuclear winter held that **even a small exchange** of nuclear weapons—on the order, perhaps, of 500 of the world’s 18,000 nuclear—**would throw so much** dirt, **soot,** and smoke **into the atmosphere that the earth would be plunged into** darkness and subfreezing temperatures, a **“winter” lasting long enough to create** “a real possibility of the **extinction** of the human species” Unlike doomsday scenarios that preceded it, **the theory of nuclear** weapons **winter was based upon “extensive scientific studies**,” and it had been “endorsed by a large number of scientists.”

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